Nova Scotia ECD

2001-02 Workplan

Our Children: Today's Investment, Tomorrow's Promise

103-06133/

The beginnings of all things are small.

– Cicero

Building an Early Childhood Development System for Nova Scotia

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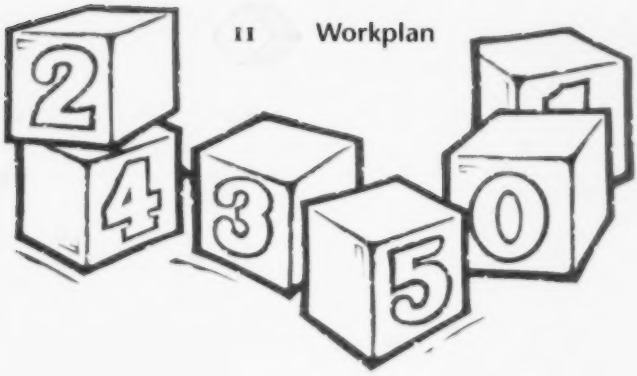


This workplan for 2001/02 provides specific strategies which support the Early Childhood Development (ECD) Vision document *"Our Children ... Today's Investment Tomorrow's Promise"* and Nova Scotia's ECD Baseline Report. Developing a comprehensive system of early childhood development involves expanding programs, establishing new programs and a weaving together of all programs related to early childhood development. To accomplish this, we will challenge government, the child care sector and communities over the next several years to work together, build on existing services and incorporate new and more appropriate ways to better serve children and families throughout these important early years.

Components of the comprehensive system are:

- enhanced home visiting
- quality child care
- supports for children with special needs
- parent education and support
- a variety of training strategies to support all the components

On November 28, 2001, the Government approved the implementation of the Child Care Stabilization and the System Development Components of the Early Childhood Development Initiative in Nova Scotia. In the interest of proceeding with implementation prior to the end of fiscal year 2001-2002, the province allocated 2001/02 ECD funds based on:

- the Vision document - *Our Children... Today's Investment, Tomorrow's Promise*
- consultation with the early childhood field
- best practice research
- initiatives already begun by communities in the Province.

In the 2002/03 fiscal year, the Department of Community Services will establish Regional Early Childhood Development Planning Teams. These Regional ECD Planning Teams will engage local stakeholders in the planning, decision making and implementation of future ECD strategies province-wide for the remainder of this multi-year Federal / Provincial / Territorial Agreement.

In proceeding with the allocation of 2001/02 Federal funds, resources will be used to implement the following strategies:

1. Enhancing Home Visiting

2. Stabilizing and Enhancing Child Care

a. Child Care Stabilization Grant

b. Early Childhood Education training initiatives

c. Inclusion of children with special needs

d. New and expanded Centres in full and part-day non-profit child care centres

3. Developing a Comprehensive System of Early Childhood Development

a. Early Language & Learning strategy

b. Childcare Resource & Referral Services

Following are descriptions of the investments to be made in these three priority areas in 2001/02 toward building "the comprehensive system of early childhood development." These strategies will be planned and implemented through a variety of processes that enable regional input and consultation with the early childhood sector, as well as provincial policy direction. In the 2002/03 fiscal year, we will ask communities to plan programs and linkages which will build on the investments being made in 2001/2002. Plans for community participation are in progress.

1. Enhanced Home Visiting

Description:

Home Visiting is a critical component of early intervention and prevention services for families. Many researchers, policy-makers and practitioners have recommended the expansion of home visiting programs to improve developmental outcomes for those children most at risk. Home visiting is most effective if it is started early and is intensive, flexible and sustained.

Healthy Beginnings: Enhanced Home Visiting Initiative will enable Public Health Services to contact all new families in the postpartum period, as well as offer intensive home visiting to families who require additional support for the first three years.

Healthy Beginnings is not designed to be a stand alone program. Existing services both within and outside Public Health Services will be used whenever possible. Many factors determine the health of a family including income, education, housing and food security. Many government departments, agencies and community partners need to work together with the family to achieve healthy outcomes.

Key components of Healthy Beginnings include:

- All newborns in Nova Scotia will be screened, using a standardized screening tool, to identify families potentially at risk.
- For families identified through the screening process as potentially benefiting from additional, ongoing support an in - depth family assessment will be completed, with family consent, to identify required interventions and supports.
- All families will be contacted by telephone/home visit for breastfeeding and postpartum support, health education and linkage to community resources.
- Healthy Beginnings will use a combination of public health nurses and trained lay home visitors (proposed implementation year two) to support families identified through the in - depth assessment, who may benefit from additional support, for up to three years.
- Everyone involved in planning, implementing and receiving the Healthy Beginnings: Home Visiting Initiative (parents, public health staff, lay home visitors, community partners) will participate in the evaluation process.

Healthy Beginnings as part of the Early Childhood Development strategy presents an exciting opportunity to work toward a comprehensive and integrated early childhood development system for Nova Scotia.

2. Stabilizing and Enhancing Child Care

Strategies for 2001/02 towards stabilizing and enhancing child care are as follows:

2a. Nova Scotia Child Care Stabilization Grant Program

Description:

The purpose of the Nova Scotia Child Care Stabilization Grant Program is to recognize the important role and contribution of child care staff and to support the continued development of quality child care in Nova Scotia. The objective of this funding is to address the concerns respecting recruitment and retention in the Province's child care labour force by allocating funds to full-day licensed child care facilities to be specifically dedicated to staff wages and benefits.

The May 2001 provincial framework *Our Children... Today's Investment, Tomorrow's Promise*, recommended an immediate infusion of resources to stabilize salaries in the child care sector. In July of 2001, the Minister appointed a subcommittee of the Nova Scotia Round Table on Child Care, reporting to the Executive Director of Family and Children's Services and the Child Care Funding Review Working Group. The mandate of this group was to reach a consensus on a method to distribute funding dedicated for the purpose of supplementing the wages of eligible child care staff in full-day licensed child care facilities. This subcommittee, a cross-sectoral group representing both the commercial and non-profit sectors, reached a consensus and recommended a formula to determine the financial allocation for each individual child care centre.

A yearly application will be required to be submitted by licensed full day operators. On an annual basis, a stabilization grant utilization statement will be submitted by operators. In order to receive the stabilization grant, centres will also be required to demonstrate a commitment to professional development for those child care staff who are untrained. Child care centres will be expected to be in compliance with the Day Care Act and Regulations.

2b. Early Childhood Education Training Initiatives

Description:

The Early Childhood Education Training Initiatives will provide opportunities for early childhood education (ECE) pre-service and in-service training. These initiatives will be inclusive of:

- pre-service training - (students enrolled in a full or part time two (2) year Early Childhood Education (ECE) diploma program; students enrolled in the Bachelor of Applied Arts (Child and Youth Study) degree program
- in-service training - early childhood staff currently working in the fields of child care; early intervention; family home child care; family resource centres; and related early childhood fields

In-service training initiatives will be inclusive of a range of curriculum and program areas inclusive of : age group programming; special needs programming; child care administration; communication skills development; working with families; parent education; and other related areas within early childhood development.

The training initiatives will also provide a range of delivery models in both the pre-service and in-service training areas.

These will be inclusive of; presentations, seminars, distance education, teleconferencing, open learning and other training models.

Specific recommendations regarding the expenditures of the training funds will be included in the Early Childhood Education Initiatives Early Childhood Education Training Working Group Report in April/May 2002. The working group has conducted surveys of the early childhood sector, and the early childhood student population; and has conducted province-wide consultations to gather input regarding the training needs of the sector. This information will be significant in the compilation of the data and preparation of the report. Recommendations from the report will guide program development and resource allocation in providing accessible, quality education opportunities for child care providers, toward achieving enhanced child care in Nova Scotia.

2c. Inclusion of Children with Special Needs in Child Care

Description:

To ensure that infants and young children with special needs are fully included in their community- based child care program, all staff must have training to best meet the needs of children with varying abilities. Early childhood educators must be equipped to respond so that the child with special needs will be welcomed in every aspect of the daily program and recognized as an individual with capabilities. To support this, staff of the centre in which the child is enrolled must be competent to deliver quality child care, i.e. to engage in developmentally appropriate practice at all times and to be able to offer the individual attention required to support optimal development.

Providing comprehensive support to centres including children with special needs requires a two-pronged approach that supports children, parents, and caregivers:

- children with special needs will benefit from participation in a high quality child care program; and
- building program capacity and staff competencies will improve inclusive child care

In implementing an inclusive model of quality child care in Nova Scotia the resource commitments for 2001/02 in ECD includes province-wide implementation of the following two programs focused on children with special needs:

Open Doors is a project designed to meet this need. It assesses program quality, supports positive change, and develops a mentor ship capacity within the system, thereby assisting other centres to build their quality programs. This initiative is based on a very successful, recently completed research project in New Brunswick, PEI and Saskatchewan.

Staff members working with children who have special needs require specific training to deliver a program effectively. **Building Blocks** targets training to those early childhood educators who need to enhance their skill set. In particular, it teaches a problem-solving approach to inclusion, and makes the most of the specialists and therapists in the community who can help with individual children. This program was created and published in Nova Scotia by the Progress Centre for Early Intervention, a non-profit early intervention program operating with Department of Community Services funds. Building Blocks will offer in-service training to child care staff who are primarily responsible for the children with special needs within their programs in each region.

2d. Start-Up and Expansion Grants for Non-Profit Child Care Centres

Description:

The Child Care Start-Up and Expansion Grant Program is intended to support the growth and development of a quality non-profit, community-based child care infrastructure in Nova Scotia as one key component of a comprehensive early childhood development system.

Nova Scotia must improve access to quality, regulated early childhood programs and services by increasing the availability and affordability of such programs. There are currently not enough licensed child care spaces to meet the need. The start-up and expansion grant program is intended to promote the development of new licensed spaces, especially in currently under-served areas of the province.

Approximately $1.6M will be allocated from the 2001/02 ECD budget for this initiative. In April, 2002, an application for expansion and start-up of child care spaces will be sent to full and part- day non-profit child care centres, and to all family resource centres in the province. Other non-profit organizations who have forwarded an expression of interest to apply for these grants will also be sent an application.

3. Developing A Comprehensive System

Strategies for 2001/02 toward developing a Comprehensive System of Early Childhood Development are as follows:

3a. Early Language & Learning Program Provincial Strategy

Description:

TLC3 is a national strategy designed to promote the early development of children's language and cognitive development. TLC3 is an acronym that conveys a three-way meaning for the program:

Tender Loving Care

Thinking, Learning, Communicating

The Learning Centre

This successful pilot is currently in its fifth year of operation in Nova Scotia based in the Dartmouth Family Resource Centre. It is proposed that this model be adapted to create a provincial Early Language and Learning Program province-wide.

The deliverables are a rich variety of programs including: parent and child interactive programs, enriched training in child care settings and parent education components. The Speech and Language Pathologist serves in a teaching and capacity-building role and threads her expertise throughout all the settings where young children live and play. The program models used are based on the renowned Hanen Institute programs for young children and are as follows:

Learning Language and Loving It is an extensive training program designed to enhance the skills of staff in child care settings. The teachings provide child care staff with strategies to promote language development through their everyday activities.

You Make the Difference is designed for parents with difficulties accessing resources. The materials are well designed and easily understood at low literacy levels. The goal of the program is to help parents become aware of the many ways they can promote language development with their young children.

The Parent Child Mother Goose Program is an interactive parent and child program not only intended to enhance language development through singing and rhyming activities but also to facilitate the quality of the parent-child relationship by encouraging parents to interpret their infants' cues.

Implementation will be province-wide.

3b. Child Care Resource and Referral services

Description:

The purpose of Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Programs is to enhance and improve the quality and accessibility of a range of child care options for families in Nova Scotia. CCR&Rs provide local child care planning and the provision of new services to meet the unique needs of both urban and rural communities. These programs assist both caregivers and parents with opportunities for training, access to information, and support on child care related matters.

Child Care Resource and Referral Programs have long been established throughout many parts of Canada and the United States. The start up of Child Care Resource and Referral Services in Nova Scotia was a recommended strategy of the Healthy Child Development Initiatives Steering Committee in 1998 and has been in the planning stage since that date.

Reporting on the progress in implementation of these strategies will be outlined in the development of Nova Scotia's first Annual Report and Shared Framework reports due in the fall of 2002.

Work in Progress

ECD Work Plan February 2002 to February 2003

Task	2002											2003	
	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB
Administration Planning													
2001/02 Hire Required Staffing													
.5 Comprehensive System Planning/Coordination													
1 Clerk (secondment) - necessary paperwork and set up interview process													
1 Policy/Program Dev./Training - necessary paperwork and interview process													
1 Financial Coordinator/Audit/Accountability - necessary paperwork and interview process													
3 - month consultant - necessary paperwork and hiring													
Baseline Report													
Draft report for input													
Approval to Ex. Director, Deputy & Minister													
Printing (with Communications Nova Scotia) and send to Ottawa													
ECD Workplan March/02 to March/03													
Draft Report for input													
Approval to Ex. Director and Deputy													
Printing with Communications N.S. (maybe to Ottawa)													
Establish Provincial Steering Committee													
Prepare Agenda													
Prepare Presentations													
2002/03 Staffing proposal to Deputy Minister													
2002/03 Planning Meeting for the Comprehensive System													
Meet with RA's and Child Welfare Specialists to develop job descriptions for Early Childhood Specialist and Community Development Consultants.													
Job Descriptions & Discussions													
Hire the Community Development Consultants - 1 per Region													
Framework for ECD Evaluation													
Develop three federal reports													
Develop Accountability on Funding ECD													

Work in Progress

ECD Work Plan February 2002 to February 2003

Task	2002											2003	
	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB
Set up Accounts for Funding ECD													
Links to Health Canada													
Link to Health Canada													
Link to HRDC													
Develop Comprehensive System Framework document													
Internal review, R.A.'s, etc., - Present to Steering Committee													
Define systems													
Comprehensive ECD System													
Comprehensive System Document development													
Consultation Design													
Presentation to Senior Operations Committee													
Presentation to Public Health Working Group													
Presentation to ECD Provincial Steering Committee													
Establish Regional Planning Tables and develop decision making supports													
Design Regional Planning Tables													
Geo-mapping - environmental scan													
Develop "Tool Kit" for Regional Planning Tables													
Language and Learning (TLC3) and Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) Work Plan													
Meet with Health Canada													
Prepare Presentation Materials for Regional Meetings													
Regional Meetings													
Prepare participants lists													
Organize dates													
Prepare Memos to Regional Administrators													
Prepare letters of Invitation to Resource Centres													

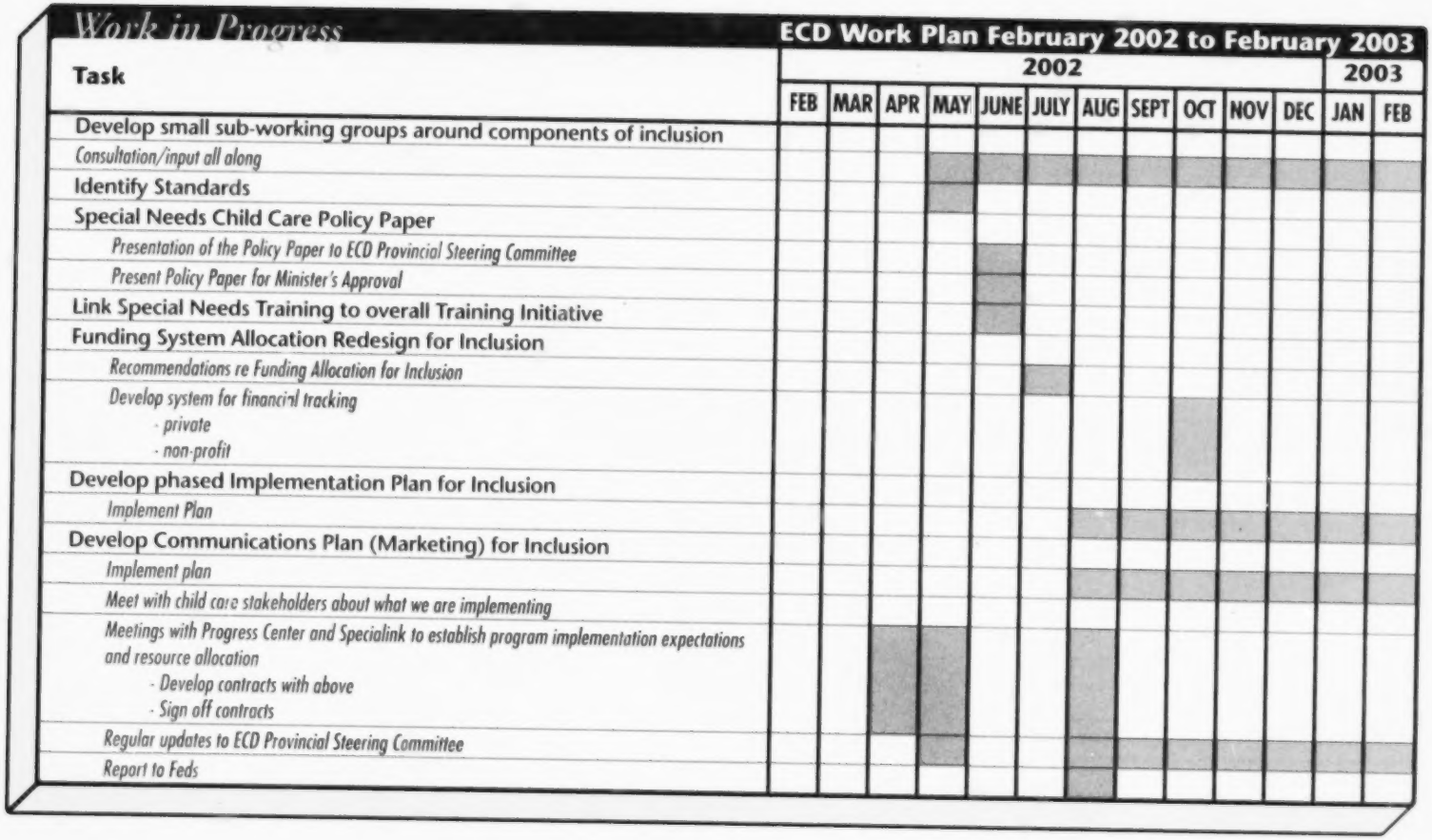
Work in Progress

ECD Work Plan February 2002 to February 2003

Task	2002											2003	
	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB
Draft an Application for CCRR's and TLC3 Programs													
Draft Contract													
Consultant summary of applications													
Application Target receipt by April 26, Review of Application TLC3 and CCRR													
Contract Sign-off process													
Develop/Complete Parent Education Framework													
Survey groups (Completed)													
Design Focus Groups													
Focus Groups write up													
Literature Review													
Final Parent Education Document													
Incorporate Parent Education into Comprehensive System													
Quality Child Care Key Initiatives: Special Needs													
Develop Special Needs Consultation Group													
Focused Consultation													
Special Needs Working Group consultation meeting													
Develop Base Line: current status, environmental scan on special needs and early intervention.													
Advice to Policy Paper for Working Group													
Develop Infrastructure Support/Human Resources													
Consultation - support model													
Four Regional Specialists													
- develop position descriptions													
- commence hiring process													

Work in Progress

ECD Work Plan February 2002 to February 2003



Work in Progress

ECD Work Plan February 2002 to February 2003

Task	2002											2003	
	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB
Quality Child Care													
Key Initiatives: Training Skills Development													
ECD Working Group on Training													
Consultations with child care association													
Consultations: Surveys (Students/Sector) and Regional Consultations (Public) complete Dec '01 and Jan '02													
Data Analysis from Consultations/Surveys													
Draft Recommendation of Training Group													
Criteria for funding training proposals													
Training Centre Programs													
Look at proposed allocations to each center in concert with recommendations of Training Working Group and enrollment plans													
Hiring - Policy/Program Development/Training													
Draft contracts with Training Centres													
Sign Off Contracts													
Report to Executive Director FCS and ECD Provincial Steering Committee													
Review Proposals for Training Dollars													
Link to overall funding accounts													
Implementation of Training Plan													
Policy - look at legislation re equivalency													
Policy re funding training													
Discuss with field access in training options													
Review and revise subsidy policies/process													

Work in Progress

ECD Work Plan February 2002 to February 2003

Task	2002											2003	
	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB
Quality Child Care **Key Initiatives: Child Care Options**													
Define Options													
Establish Priorities													
Best Practices Document on Options for Quality Child Care													
Quality Child Care **Key Initiatives: Stabilization**													
Administration													
Wage Enhancement Committee - formula developed (Completed)													
Wage and Training Survey (Completed)													
Stabilization Grant - Applications mailed out to 199 Centres (Completed)													
Stabilization Grant distributed (2001/02 Retroactive)													
2002/2003 First installment Stabilization Grant application and utilization statement													
Distribute utilization statement for completion and return for end of May re August installment based on this information													
IT System for Stabilization Grant developed - data collected													
2002/2003 Second installment September 2002													
Hiring Licensing Staff													
Accountability Review on spending, licensing, etc., before other cheques go out													
Licensing needs to be reflective of inclusion													
Money out													
Hiring of Financial/Policy staff													
Data Analysis													
Report on stabilization to Steering Committee													
Communications and Marketing Plan													

Work in Progress

ECD Work Plan February 2002 to February 2003

Task	2002											2003	
	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB
Quality Child Care **Key Initiatives: New and Expanded Centres**													
Applications Received													
Summary of Applications													
Review of Applications													
Recommendations shared with Regional Administrators													
Develop Contracts													
Contracts with Centres													
"Healthy Beginnings" **Enhanced Home Visiting Initiative**													
Provincial Steering Committee Process													
Periodic reporting of recommendations and decisions to Public Health Working Group													
Provincial Program Framework													
Recommend program goals, process and outcome objectives and program standards													
Recommend objective indicators													
Funding Formulae - review options and recommend (Ongoing)													
Identify target groups for Enhanced Home Visiting phase in (all parents, first time parents, screened in parents)													
Baseline Report 2001													
Prepare/compile documentation for Prov/Fed Annual Reports													
Provincial Program Supports													
Home Visiting literature review completed (contract out)													
Recommend screening tool (Growing Together Screening and Assessment - foundational work)													
Recommend process for implementation of screening tool; who, where, consent, training													
Anticipate opportunities for further developmental screening and building on key messages e.g. Nutrition, oral health, safety ...													

ECD Work Plan February 2002 to February 2003

Task	2002											2003	
	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB
Recommend/adapt consistent "postnatal key messages" component (Postnatal Guarantee Program - foundational work)													
Recommend initial and ongoing Public Health Services staff training													
Review of Provincial Postnatal Care Standards - Inventory of existing Postnatal Services/gaps (Contract out)													
Recommend Provincial Standards for initial postpartum contact													
Recommend in depth family assessment tool (Growing Together Screening and Assessment - foundational work)													
Oversee review of existing paraprofessional home visiting programs in N.S. (contract out)													
Recommend lay vs. paraprofessional home visitor role and training needs													
Recommend structure for home visitors within Public Health Services - reporting relationship, supervision, evaluation, ongoing training.													
Provincial Evaluation Framework													
Program evaluation framework (contract out)													
Recommend role and process for ongoing monitoring													
Complete process evaluation on the work of the Provincial Steering Committee													
Shared Service Area Implementation Teams													
Develop proposal/communication template for Shared Service Area Implementation Teams													
Receive Shared Service Area Implementation Team plans													
Phased Shared Service Area implementation begins													
Communication													
Provide regular updates to Public Health Managers, District Health Authority CEO's,													
Public Health Staff, other partners													
Recommend communication/marketing strategy for program													
Facilitate program updates between PHS and Provincial Steering Committee													

NOVA SCOTIA

Department of Community Services

Department of Health